

What began as a theory for civil rights lawyers to debate has transformed into harmful messages that ultimately seek to further divide our Nation.

CRT and The 1619 Project have no place in our schools, our workplaces, or our military.

Our Nation's founding principles of equality and freedom are worth fighting for and protecting. While our Nation isn't perfect, we always strive for that more perfect Union. We have made progress in the last 100 years and are still the greatest Nation in the world. This progress would be lost should we allow the divisive, racist rhetoric of critical race theory into our classrooms.

As a mother and a former teacher, I believe our education system is at its best when we inspire our young people to be all they can be and share with them the principles showcased in America's traditional motto, "e pluribus unum," which means, out of many, one. That is the unique greatness of our country, the idea of being a melting pot of people from different countries, races, and backgrounds, but we become one as Americans.

Our schools should never stifle the growth of our children, belittle them based on the color of their skin, or teach them that they themselves or their families are racist regardless of their individual beliefs.

The American Dream is alive and well and should be fanned into flames, not crushed by critical race theory's restrictive and damaging rhetoric. That is the last thing our children need.

Since critical race theory has entered the national discussion, Missourians and parents across the country have expressed strong disdain for teaching our students that this country is inherently racist and that minority groups are unable to succeed within our country's current systems and institutions.

Today, I stand by those parents. I cannot condone an education system that teaches students to be ashamed of our country and to judge each other based on the color of our skin. And I believe neither would Martin Luther King, Jr. Our kids deserve better.

PAYMENT PAUSE FOR STUDENT LOANS SHOULD BE EXTENDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, last January, in one of his first executive orders, President Biden extended the student loan pause on monthly payments through the end of September.

This order allowed all direct student loans issued by the Federal Government through the U.S. Department of Education, again, to have a grace period during the recession that we are still experiencing. Even with a good job

growth last month, 800,000 jobs added to the economy, a 5.6 percent unemployment rate, and having people starting to again recover, the need for that pause was blindingly obvious.

A couple weeks ago, myself and Congresswoman AYANNA PRESSLEY wrote to President Biden and the Secretary of Education calling on the President to extend that pause again. We are about 60 days away from all these student loans snapping back with very high interest rates, and again, at a time when the economy is still recovering.

Madam Speaker, this is exactly what the Small Business Administration did for disaster loans issued during COVID when they extended the grace period allowed of 1 year, when those loans were issued during COVID, to have that grace period extended into 2022. That was a smart, wise move recognizing that this is the wrong time to add debt burden on individuals and businesses as the U.S. economy starts to recover.

Again, we understand that at some point we are going to have to have a return to student loan debt payments, but, again, there are additional reasons why this pause makes sense.

Two of the largest debt servicers, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, which services a large number of student loan debts, announced a couple of weeks ago they are withdrawing from the program, which means that borrowers are going to be shifted to new servicers, as well as the New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation.

So again, the dislocation and the change that is happening with student loan servicers are additional reasons why the President and Secretary Cardona should agree to our request.

Moving forward, it is time for Congress to act to fix some of the problems within the student loan space.

Congressman DUSTY JOHNSON and I, on a bipartisan basis, back in January, introduced the Recognizing Military Service in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Act. A companion bill in the Senate was introduced by Senator RUBIO and Senator HASSAN.

Again, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program was created back in 2007 basically to allow teachers, nurses, people serving in the military, cops—who will, again, make 10 years of payments on their student loans while holding down public service jobs—to be eligible for discharge of their student loan debt.

The last administration butchered this program. People who, again, for 10 years abided by the rules were refused and denied student loan discharge, including people serving in the military.

Our bill will untangle that bottleneck, will recognize that people who are on Active Duty overseas, away from their families, who again, were allowed a grace period in terms of monthly payments, those months will be credited towards public service loan forgiveness. It has been endorsed by

every veteran service organization from VFW to the Iraq and Afghan War Veterans, and again, is a smart bipartisan bill which will help a population of people who perform the highest form of public service; namely, wearing the uniform of this country.

We should also, as Congress, change the law to allow people to refinance down the interest rate on their student loan debt. When these loans snap back, we are looking at 6 percent, 7 percent, 8 percent interest on legacy student loan debt.

The rest of the economy with a zero percent benchmark at the Federal Reserve is refinancing debt on homes, on consumer loans, on auto debt, but student loan borrowers are trapped unless Congress acts.

H.R. 3024 allows the Department of Education to refinance down the interest rates on student loan debt so that people, again, in a very low-interest rate environment—and the chairman of the Federal Reserve announced the other day he is going to keep the benchmark at zero through 2021. Student loan borrowers should get the benefit of those low interest rates just like every other middle class family that refines their home or their consumer debt.

So, extend the pause. Let's fix the problems in the meantime. Congress can act.

The millennials, the young people of this country deserve our help, both to act with the tools that we have, and also, calling on the administration to provide an additional grace period just like we did for small businesses.

HONORING DOUG WRIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Carolina (Ms. MACE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a law enforcement officer from Summerville, South Carolina, who spent his career ensuring the safety of South Carolina residents and our neighborhoods.

Doug Wright began his career in 1997 by joining the Summerville Police Department. He has since dedicated over 20 years of his career to protecting our community, and I can think of no better thing to do today than to recognize the good work that our law enforcement does every single day in our communities and keeping us safe.

Through his career, Doug has worked diligently as a patrol team watch commander, uniform patrol division commander, and supervisor of the K-9 unit. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention Doug's 6 years as a Marine reservist.

In April, Chief Wright was promoted to chief of police for Summerville after serving as deputy. The vote by town council members was unanimous. This is a glowing endorsement of the work that Doug has done in his career for Summerville over the last 20 years.

Most recently, last week I was honored to award Chief Wright with a commendation from Congress for his work, and I was also able to watch and witness some of the less-than-lethal work that the Summerville Police Department is doing with the BolaWrap during that time.

Chief Wright exemplifies service in the Lowcountry in South Carolina's First Congressional District.

A NOTABLE RESCUE

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and highlight a notable rescue that took place off the coast of South Carolina's First Congressional District.

Many of us in the Lowcountry took for granted tropical storm Elsa when it hit our shores.

On July 7, as Elsa was beginning to strengthen at the beginning of this season's hurricane season, a family of six was visiting the Lowcountry from West Virginia. They were caught in 6-foot waves north of St. Helena.

That afternoon, the family had sailed their 21-foot Carolina skiff to tiny Otter Island from Edisto Beach.

As the weather worsened and the wind picked up, the boat drifted off the island into stormy waters.

Unfortunately, there was no SOS system available to the family, and the father actually decided to jump in the water and swim out for help after spotting a shrimp boat. The emergency was radioed in, and Skipper Clay Emminger of Beaufort Water Search and Rescue answered the call of duty.

Ultimately, the Coast Guard was able to reach the family, despite deteriorating visibility, and a woman and four female children were hoisted to safety in a Dolphin helicopter.

I am pleased this family was rescued, and I wish to extend my sincerest thanks to the U.S. Coast Guard, the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, and South Carolina's Department of Natural Resource.

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RECOGNIZING GREGG RUSSELL

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the efforts and talents of Hilton Head's very own folk musician and, indeed, a South Carolina legend by the name of Gregg Russell.

For 40 years, Gregg has highlighted and delighted families around the Old Liberty Tree at Harbor Town in Hilton Head Island.

While these days Gregg is singing songs for families and children, he shared the stage with many celebrities over the years. He even wrote the hit song, "Come Away Home" about Hilton Head Island, which inspired the movie of the same name.

His performances are renowned to locals and tourists alike who visit Hilton Head Island, and he has received a nomination for an Angel Award and won Best Children's Live Action Video in 2000.

Gregg doesn't just contribute with his music to our community, through

his charity, Hilton Head Heroes, Gregg and his wife, Wendy, provide needy and sick children every year with a vacation to Hilton Head Island as well.

On Gregg's 40th year anniversary—and it actually might be a few more than that—I am happy to draw attention to his career here on the House floor and thank him for everything he has done for the Hilton Head Island community.

PFAS ACTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the PFAS Action Act, a bill that I am proud to cosponsor and that will address a critically important issue in my district and across the country, PFAS contamination.

This bill will take bold action to address PFAS contamination and it contains a number of provisions in particular that will affect our smallest communities; and I want to share those today.

From the very early days when I became a Member of Congress, one of the issues that my residents were talking about more than anything else was the need to access clean water. In particular, Michiganders are concerned about increasing levels of PFAS and other toxic chemicals that we are continuing to find in our drinking water.

In Michigan, water is our identity. We are the home of the Great Lakes, and protecting our water and our waters is one of the most bipartisan issues you will find in the State of Michigan.

I have always believed that environmental security is homeland security, because it is about the safety and security of our kids and the preservation of our way of life in Michigan.

If you can't take your grandchildren fishing in the lakes you grew up on, or can't safely hand your child a glass of water without knowing they might get a learning disability, that is a threat to your family.

We have kicked the can down the road long enough when it comes to finally addressing the PFAS issue, and I am happy to stand here today to fight for a bill that will make a real difference in people's lives when it comes to clean water.

Today, the House is going to vote on several amendments that I drafted and introduced and come directly from on-the-ground conversations I have had with residents in my district. Here is a story for you:

In Michigan, roughly 25 percent of our households get our water from private wells, including myself and my family farm. And even though there is a great deal of public reporting on PFAS contamination in our public water sources, those of us who have private wells do not have a ton of access to best practices, information, how we test.

So back in 2020, I went on a wells and waterways tour in my district and hosted an evening in Davisburg, in Oakland County, right before COVID came to us to talk directly with people who have private wells about how we can make sure that our water is protected, clean, safe, and tested.

The response was overwhelming. We had 150 people on a weekday to talk about how we protect those of us on private wells. Most people do not have the resources, information, or tools they need to get their private wells tested.

These questions led to a bill that I am proud to cosponsor called the Test Your Well Water Act, which ended up being included in the PFAS Action Act. It requires the EPA to set up a website with information for residents on private wells, including how to get your water tested, treatment options, and financial assistance to help homeowners afford the necessary treatment.

I also wrote an amendment to the PFAS Action Act to ensure that this website also contains information about the health risks associated with PFAS. My goal was to create a resource that would be able to answer the questions I received from my constituents a little over a year ago in Davisburg.

The fight to protect safe drinking water for all Michiganders actually starts usually with local advocacy from people in our districts who are directly impacted by that PFAS contamination. This includes people like Stacy Taylor.

Stacy is a resident of my town of Holly, Michigan, and she gets her water directly from a well on her property. When she and her husband started experiencing serious health effects, she suspected there may be PFAS in her water supply.

Stacy conducted intense research on her well and Holly's history, digging through old documents, deeds, and maps to figure out where the problem may lie. When she presented her findings to our office—and she was diligent about coming to find me everywhere I was in the district—we reached out to the State agency that is responsible for testing our water sources in Michigan, and it turns out Stacy was right. There was PFAS in her water supply—in our water supply.

But discovering the contamination isn't the end of the story. We have to make sure that our towns and cities can clean up these chemicals and provide their residents with clean water, even our smallest communities.

Because of Stacy's dogged advocacy and countless other local folks across my district, one of my amendments to the PFAS Action Act will beef up assistance to local and community governments that would otherwise really struggle to pay for PFAS cleanup. The cost can often be prohibitive.

The stories my constituents have shared have helped shape this bill to be more effective and impactful. In the